

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the subject application as amended herein is respectfully requested.

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended during the Interview of March 3, 2005. As discussed at the interview, the present application pertains to novel furniture pieces.

Traditionally, furniture pieces made of wood are desirable because of their natural look and feel. Typically, wood furniture pieces are made of either solid wood or wood planks which have a tendencies of warping and which needs to be relatively thick to be able to support loads. As a result furniture members made of solid wood are bulky and heavy. Most often, wood furniture is made of a composite wood material such as plywood are used. Furniture members made of this material are still relatively thick and heavy looking. Moreover, plywood is hard to bend.

The present inventors have discovered that furniture pieces made of laminates formed of alternating layers of wood and artificial fibers having high structural strength provide a synergistic combination because they can be used to form furniture pieces that are much thinner and lighter than the prior art members. The inventors further discovered that laminates having the same general structure but somewhat different characteristics (including different thicknesses) could be used to make different types of furniture members. For example a 'support laminate' could be used to make the legs and other structural elements, a 'thin laminate' could be used for members forming curved surfaces, such as the back of a chair or its seat, and a 'platform laminate' could be used to make support surfaces, such as a table top. The structure of these types of laminates is described in the specification and the drawings. The resulting furniture pieces are esthetically

superior to other types of furniture because they have a clean, light and airy look. Moreover, the furniture pieces are in fact much lighter than furniture pieces made from standard materials. Attached hereto is a declaration by inventor Kevin Waltz that provides some data illustrating these points. More specifically, as discussed in the declaration, chair legs made from the support laminate have a thickness of $13/32$ ", while chair legs made of solid wood or plywood are typically $1-1/4$ " and $3/4$ " respectively. A chair seat made of the thin laminate material can be $3/32$ " thick. Chair seats made from solid wood or plywood can be typically 1" and $1/2$ " respectively. Chair back rests made of thin laminate material may be $3/32$ " thick while back rests made of a solid wood or plywood may be $7/8$ " and $3/8$ " thick, respectively, obviously, then furniture pieces made of the laminates described in the present invention are much thinner.

It is also instructive to compare the weights of furniture pieces constructed in accordance with this invention with pieces made from traditional material. As discussed by Mr. Walz, a chair made of a laminate material weighs only 1 lb, while solid wood or plywood chairs may weigh as much as $3-1/2$ and 5 lbs., respectively. Similarly a cocktail table having the structure illustrated in the drawings (see Fig. 3A, 3B) could weigh about 5 lbs, while a similar table made of solid wood or plywood weighs as much as 30 and 40 lbs respectively.

Clearly, furniture piece made in accordance with the present invention are superior as demonstrated by the Exhibits A, B, C, D and E of record.

The Examiner has rejected the claims as being anticipated by and obvious in view of Tingley '959. The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Thigley discloses a laminar wood beam. These types of beams are used in the construction industry to support floors, ceilings, roofs, etc. The beam consists of several layers of wood boards or blanks joined by

adhesive layers. In order to increase the bending resistance of this material, fibers are introduced into the glue.

It is respectfully submitted that the design, technological and engineering considerations used in the construction industry for making a building are completely different than the ones used for furniture making. These differences have to do with the relative sizes of buildings vs. furniture pieces, the loads carried by beams vs. loads in a furniture piece, the relative weights of these structures, the esthetic looks of buildings vs. furniture pieces, and so on. In view of these differences, there is nothing in this reference which teaches a person skilled in the art how to make furniture pieces. Obviously, chairs, cocktail tables, etc., are not made from wood beams. Moreover, this reference fails to teach that different types of laminates should be used for different furniture elements.

To further differentiate the claims over Tingley, the claims have been amended to recite the relative thicknesses of the various layers in the different laminates. As described in the claims, when laminate materials A, B and C are compared, the relative thicknesses of the inner and outer wood layers are different, the relative thicknesses of the artificial fiber and the wood layers are different and the thicknesses of the artificial fibers used in materials A and B are different. There is nothing in Tingley that teaches these relative relationships.

The Examiner also rejected the claims under 35 USC sec. 112 because, in his view, the terms 'high structural support,' 'high structural strength' and 'thin laminate' are indefinite. It is respectfully submitted the terms "high structural strength" and high structural support" when

referring to fibers are well known in the art and need no further explanation. The terms "thin laminate," "structural" laminate" and "platform laminate" are used merely to designate the various types of materials used to make furniture pieces. However, the structure of each type of material is clearly defined in the claims and accordingly the claims are not indefinite.

It is respectfully submitted that the subject application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 10, 2005